A. "A HISTORY OF NEWTON COUNTY"

Newton County Courthouse, 101 S. Wood St., Neosho, MO *Artist: Billie Gofourth-Stewart*

This Newton County Courthouse Mural is the largest mural in the county. Painted in 1996 by Billie Gofourth-Stewart, with portrait assistance from Julie Olds, the mural measures 88 x 7.5 feet. It is on the main floor of the Newton County Courthouse in downtown Neosho. It covers most of the open space on the walls, and is done in five panels, each of which represent a specific period of time – ranging from 1837 to 1970. Artist Stewart paid homage to even small developments in the county. For example, the placement of a country mailbox marks the time period when rural mail delivery was instituted. Stewart captured not only the "big" historical events but also the area's flora and fauna. Many small images in the mural will likely be lost in history since the artists hid little things in the work to mark personal friendships, relatives or other dates and events. These can be found throughout the work on such places as car license plates and in other obscure places. Many famous citizens such as George Washington Carver, Herman Jaeger, and James Scott are included, as well as a self-portrait of the artist in her blue jeans and bobby socks.

B. "TIPTON FORD"

United Methodist Church, 224 S. Wood St., Neosho, MO Artist: Anthony Benton Gude

A great tragedy, the 1914 Motor Car Wreck, was the inspiration for Anthony Benton Gude's mural in the Neosho United Methodist Church. The idea behind the mural was to showcase the community of Christian faith and coming together of black and white citizens after a tragic train wreck near the small community of Tipton Ford. In that wreck, dozens of people were killed, many of whom were returning to Neosho after Emancipation Day activities in Joplin. Because many bodies were unidentifiable, a mass funeral was held and 33 caskets were buried together in the Neosho I.O.O.F. Cemetery. Their grave is marked with a large stone, which is depicted in the center of the mural. This marker is just inside the front gate of the I.O.O.F. Cemetery. This Tipton Ford Wreck mural, which measures 10 x 6 feet, is the second done by Anthony Benton Gude. It was dedicated on December 6, 2008, and funded by Fred Clark, Clark Funeral Homes and private donors.

Questions? Visit us online at newtoncountymotourism.org

Other NEOSHO ATTRACTIONS

1) Neosho National Fish Hatchery 520 East Park Street

The Hatchery was established in 1888, and is the oldest operating federal Fish Hatchery in the U.S. It provides recovery efforts for endangered Pallid Sturgeon, Paddlefish, Native mussels, Lake Sturgeon and Rainbow Trout for Lake Taneycomo, Mo.

2) Crowder College 601 LaClede Avenue

Crowder College was founded in 1963. It is named for General Enoch Crowder, a prominent Missourian, soldier and statesman. It also honors all WWII veterans who trained at Fort Crowder. Crowder College has achieved worldwide recognition for it's innovative Alternative Energy Program and MARET Center. The college is also developing a Mural Art Program. Their most recent mural is "CampUs Crowder," displayed in Newton Hall. The school's enrollment surpassed 4,400 students in the fall of 2009.

3) Hickory Creek between Hwy 86 and College Street

Hickory Creek, a charming spring-fed stream, winds its way pleasantly through Neosho, Missouri. The name "Neosho" comes from "ne-o-zho" or "Ne-u-zuh" which are Native American derivatives meaning "clear or abundant water." Designated as a White Ribbon trout stream, it is periodically stocked with trout by the Neosho National Fish Hatchery.

4) World's Largest Flower Box 930 North College St.

Neosho is proud to be home of the World's Largest Flower Box. After acquiring a railroad gondola car, it was transformed into a flower box. It's 66 feet long, eight feet wide and 44 inches deep. The flower box is filled with flowers, shrubs, and trees and is a beautiful addition to Morse Park.

5) Big Spring Park 308 West Spring Street

One of the most photographic scenes in Neosho and a popular wedding site is Big Spring Park. Renowned nationwide for its beauty, the park features stunning gardens, picnic tables, a floral clock, a children's wading pool and playground. It flows with springs streaming by six rose gardens and a trout pond where all can enjoy feeding the fish.

6) Lincoln School 620 Young Street

This small house holds a big treasure. Beneath the siding is the original Lincoln School where famed botanist George Washington Carver attended. Built in about 1872, it was the first Black school in Neosho, and provided Dr. Carver with his first experience in formal education. This building is the first of three Lincoln Schools in Neosho.

7) Newton County Historical Society 121 N. Washington

The Newton County Historical Society houses a wealth of information about Newton County. Included are extensive genealogical records, family history records including bibles and scrapbooks, cemetery records and of course, many artifacts dating to the beginning of Newton County.

COMMUNITY
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WALKING TOUR of THE MURALS of NEOSHO, MO







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A History of Newton County



Tipton Ford



Flower Box City



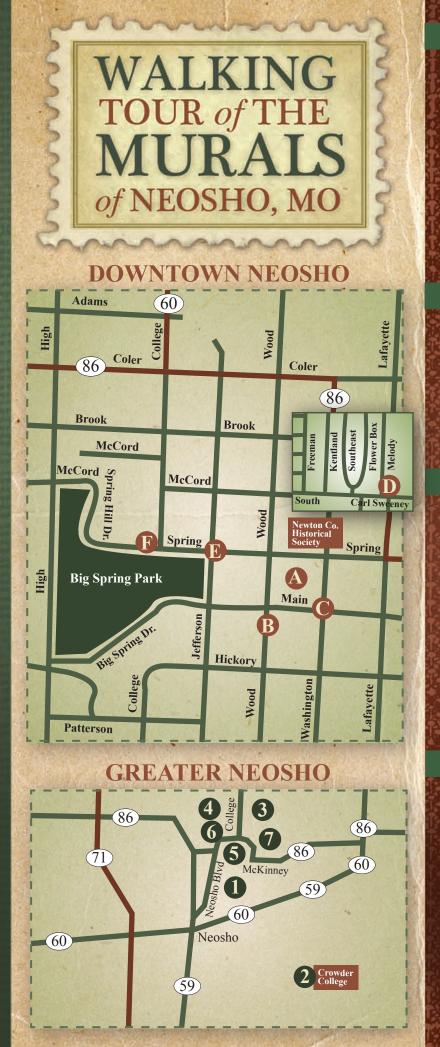
Heritage



Centennial Mural



Neosho Mural



C. "FLOWER BOX CITY"

City Hall, 203 E. Main St., Neosho, MO Artist: Anthony Benton Gude

This mural was commissioned by the Newton Country Tourism Council and was painted by Anthony Benton Gude, grandson of Neosho's famous native son, artist Thomas Hart Benton. The mural picks up in 1939 where the Centennial Mural ends. The City Hall mural carries local history on through the decades ending on May 12, 1962, which was the day of the Benton Homecoming. On that day, artist Thomas Hart Benton was honored by his hometown with a big day of celebration. The arrival of Thomas Hart Benton and his wife, Rita, is depicted in this mural, including Benton's daughter, Jessie, who was pregnant with Anthony Benton Gude at that time. The grandson painting his famous grandfather is a highlight of historical significance in this work. Many feel having Anthony Benton Gude do a mural for Neosho is something of a vindication for having never acquired one from his grandfather. The City Hall mural measures 22 x 8 feet and hangs in Neosho City Hall, located on the Neosho Square. The mural was dedicated on May 2, 2008 and was funded by the Neosho Area Business and Industrial Foundation, Inc.

D. "HERITAGE"

Benton Elementary School, 1120 Carl Sweeney Rd., Neosho, MO Artist: Sherry Pettey

This mural, done by Sherry Pettey, was the first-place winner in the first Thomas Hart Benton art contest, held in 2006 and organized by Crowder College. The winning artist won \$1,000 plus the privilege of seeing her work turned into a full-sized mural. The mural was commissioned by the Newton County Tourism Council. The mural illustrates much of the history of the county, but places Neosho native Thomas Hart Benton at the forefront. It is reported that with her cash prize and her fee for painting the actual mural, the artist was able to open an art studio in her hometown, Carthage, Missouri. "Heritage" measures 9 x 7 feet, and is based in the Benton Elementary school in Neosho, MO.

E. "CENTENNIAL MURAL"

Neosho Newton County Library, 201 W. Spring St., Neosho, MO Artist: Duard Marshall

The Centennial Mural painted by Duard Marshall was originally placed in the Neosho Municipal Auditorium, but was moved to the Neosho-Newton County Library in 2008. The community first asked Neosho native, Thomas Hart Benton, to do this mural to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the town. Benton was unavailable, but suggested his best student, Duard Marshall. The mural measures 30 feet long and 7 feet high and tells the history of the area up to 1939, including many scenes from the entire county, which seems appropriate since Neosho is the county seat. This canvas mural was painted in a second-story room on the Neosho Square and then displayed at the Centennial Celebration before being placed in the Municipal Auditorium. One of the most unusual nuggets of history in this mural is from the filming of the 1939 classic movie, "Jesse James." Some of the railroad scenes in the movie were filmed in Neosho. Another interesting scene is the passing of a plug of tobacco between a Union and a Confederate soldier with a serpent coiled between them. This depicts the division between family and friends that occurred in this region during the civil war.

F. "NEOSHO MURAL"

Mills Park Center, 308 W. Spring St., Neosho, MO Artist: Lawrence "Larry" J. Sanchez

This four-color ceramic tile mural was commissioned and designed by local artist, Lawrence J. "Larry" Sanchez who had studied at the Boston Museum School of Fine Arts. Sanchez won a mural-design contest sponsored by Safeway Stores and received \$250. This mosaic mural is called the "Neosho Mural" and was placed on the side of what was then the Neosho Safeway Store. The mural traces area history and faces Big Spring Park, which is considered to be the town's historical center. One especially unique item in the mural is an emblem of the Frisco Railroad. This emblem was inspired when an executive of the railroad came through Neosho. The local stationmaster was a trapper and he had several hides stretched out to dry at the depot. The railroad executive studied the furs and paid the stationmaster \$2 for one of the furs. He then ordered the company name to be put on a design like the outline of the furs he saw at the Neosho depot. The mural measures 9 x 45 feet and is composed of 61,000 tiles, which were applied to the wall by Willis Tile Company of Joplin. The mural was funded by Safeway Stores and dedicated in 1965. In the application of the tile, two tiles were reversed – something for viewers to ponder and try to find. The home of the mural today is in the Mills Park Center Building in Big Spring Park.